

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the allowance of claims 1, 3-9, 51-52, and 54-56.

I. EXAMINER INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Applicant and the undersigned thank Examiner Scott Jones for the courtesy of the Examiner Interview conducted today, June 9, 2008, with Michael Blankstein of WMS Gaming, Inc. and Bill Pegg of Nixon Peabody, in which the pending rejections and prior art were discussed relative to the amendments to claims 57, 64 and 68 presented herein.

At the conclusion of the interview, Examiner Jones stated that the present amendments could distinguish over the references of record, but that a response to the office action would be required.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 102 REJECTION OVER DAVIDS

Claims 57 and 59-63 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Davids (U.S. 4,517,558). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

Office Action alleges that Davids discloses a video slot machine that simulates the rotation of mechanical reels of a slot machine on a display screen. Regarding claim 57, Davids is said to disclose “a display region (video screen 12) including at least one curved display surface (video screen 12 is a CRT with a curved display surface as shown in Figure 1)” and “an image display for producing images of game indicia (22)(24)(26) defining an outcome of the slots game (1:51-63 and Figs. 1 and 2), wherein the image display projects the images onto the at least one curved display surface (see above).” As to claim 59, the Office Action alleges Davids discloses that “the game indicia (22)(24)(26) comprise one or more reel symbols (1:51-63 and Figs. 1 and 2).”

Reconsideration is requested in view of the present amendments, as Davids does not disclose (or suggest) “a display region including at least one curved display surface that approximates a radius of curvature of a mechanical reel,” “an image display device, spatially separated from the display region, for producing images of game indicia defining an outcome of the slots game, wherein the image display device projects the images of game indicia onto the at least one curved display surface such that the at least one curved display surface presents the projected images of the game indicia to a player,” as is presently recited by claims 57 and 59-63.

As was noted during the interview, video-based slot machines and mechanical slot machines generally appeal to different segments of the market and many traditionalists are still

drawn to mechanical slot machines and feel a greater sense of trust in mechanical slot machines over video-based slot machines. As discussed in the interview, and as noted in Applicant's disclosure (see page 3, lines 8-18), traditionalists have avoided video-based slot machines that merely present simulated reels video-based machines. Applicant's noted that this disapproval of such simulated reels video-based machines was "primarily due to the generally flat nature of the video screen displaying the images" and further noted that, "[w]hile there may be some slight curvature, the curvature on the video screen does not nearly approximate the curvature of a traditional mechanical reel." Applicants therefore developed the presently disclosed invention, which provides "a display region including at least one curved display surface that approximates a radius of curvature of a mechanical reel," thus "preserving the simplistic rotation of mechanical reels that traditionalists appreciate in the traditional mechanical slot machine," while providing video-based capabilities (see, e.g., page 3, lines 24-27).

III. 35 U.S.C. § 102 REJECTION OVER CHADWICK

Claims 64, 66 and 67 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Chadwick (GB 2,253,299). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

The Office Action alleges that Chadwick discloses a gaming machine "having a display screen (3) that shows images of symbols and a pseudo reel (4) having a mechanical frame means (9,10) defining a series of windows containing symbols displayed on the screen(s)" wherein "[t]he images of the symbols formed on the screen (3) may be synchronized with the movement of the frame means (9, 10)." Chadwick is also said to disclose "a mechanical reel (9, 10) comprising a curved display surface (display 3) (Fig. 2, p. 5; lines 1-12, and p. 8 lines 8-15)" and "an image display device configured to project images onto the curved display surface, the images including a plurality of symbols that indicate at least a portion of a randomly selected outcome of the slots game (Fig. 2, p. 5, lines 1-12, and p. 8 lines 8- 15)." Chadwick is further alleged to disclose "a panel (mechanical reel 9, 10) between the curved display surface and a player, the at least one curved display surface being visible through the panel (see Fig. 2)" and images that "comprise one or more animations".

Claims 64 and 66-67 recite, *inter alia*, a gaming machine for playing a slots game comprising "a mechanical reel comprising a curved display surface that approximates a radius of curvature of a mechanical reel" and "an image display device, spatially separated from the curved display surface, configured to project images onto the curved display surface such that

the curved display surface presents the projected images to a player, the images including a plurality of symbols that indicate at least a portion of a randomly selected outcome of the slots game.” As acknowledged by Examiner Jones in the interview, Chadwick does not disclose, for example, a mechanical reel comprising a curved display surface that approximates a radius of curvature of a mechanical reel or an image display device, spatially separated from the curved display surface, configured to project images onto the curved display surface such that the curved display surface presents the projected images to a player.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. 35 U.S.C. § 103 REJECTION OVER CHADWICK

Claim 68 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chadwick (GB 2,253,299). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

The Office Action acknowledged that Chadwick did not explicitly disclose the image display device is disposed behind the curved display surface, but alleged that “it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant’s invention to place a plastic screen to cover both the display screen and the mechanical reel to reduce player tampering and to decrease the maintenance costs associated with players touching the mechanical reels or display(s).”

Claim 68, as amended, recites in part that the image display device is not immediately adjacent to the curved display surface. As acknowledged by the Examiner during the Examiner Interview, Chadwick fails to disclose or suggest “a mechanical reel comprising a curved display surface that approximates a radius of curvature of a mechanical reel and an image display device, spatially separated from the curved display surface, configured to project images onto the curved display surface such that the curved display surface presents the projected images to a player” (claim 64) or further wherein such an image display device “is disposed behind the curved display surface” and “is not immediately adjacent to the curved display surface” (claim 68).

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are in condition for allowance and allowance thereof is requested.

In the event that the Examiner has any questions related to this amendment or to the application in general, it would be appreciated if the Examiner would telephone the undersigned attorney concerning such questions so that prosecution of this application may be expedited.

This response is being submitted with a request for a two-month extension of time and authorization to deduct the two-month extension fee from Nixon Peabody LLP, Deposit Account No. 50-4181, Order No. 247079-000115USPT. It is believed that no further fees are due; however, should any additional fees be required (except for payment of the issue fee), the Commissioner is authorized to deduct the fees from Nixon Peabody LLP, Deposit Account No. 50-4181, Order No. 247079-000115USPT.

Respectfully submitted,

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William D. PEGG, Reg. #42,988/
William D. Pegg
Reg. No. 42,988
Nixon Peabody LLP
161 North Clark Street, 48th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601-3213
(312) 425-3900 – Telephone
(312) 425-3909 – Facsimile
Attorneys for Applicants